

# Cross-cultural variation in the association between socio-economic family background and adolescents' alcohol use

Elena Gomes de Matos, Daniela Piontek, Tessa-Virginia Hannemann & Ludwig Kraus

**IFT**

IFT Institut für  
Therapieforschung  
www.ift.de

## Background

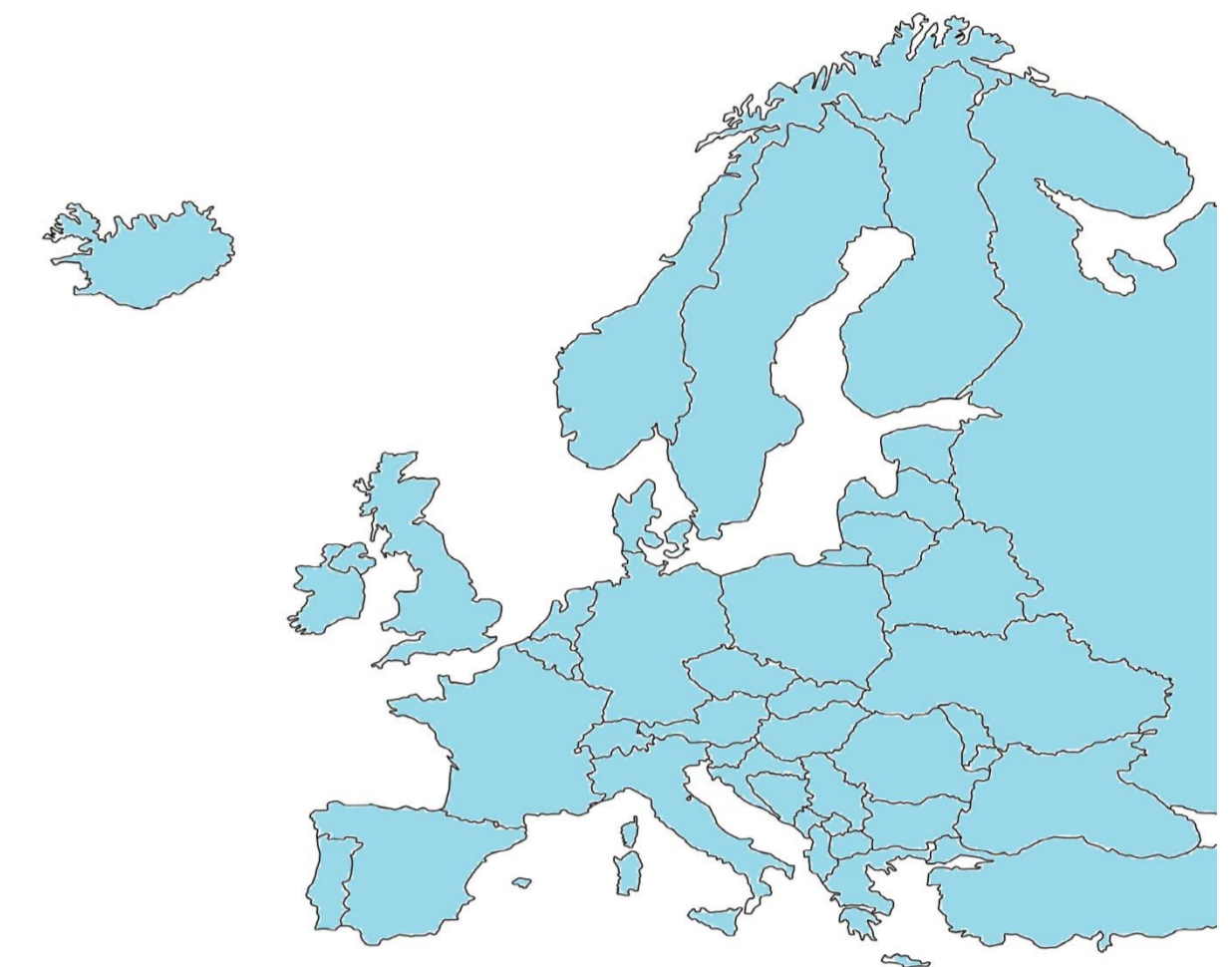
- Low socio-economic status (SES) is generally associated with
  - lower drinking frequency, lower average consumption **but**
  - higher risk for hazardous use (Casswell et al., 2003)
- Effects have not been found consistently and might vary between countries (Grittner et al., 2012)

## Research Questions

- Does the association between family SES and adolescent alcohol use vary between countries?
- Which country level characteristics may affect this relationship?

## Methods

- 2011 ESPAD study (European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs; Hibell et al., 2012)
- Participants: n = 103,336 students aged 15-16 years from 34 European countries
- Outcome: Alcohol use (lifetime prevalence, 30-day-prevalence of episodic heavy drinking)
- Individual level predictors: Family SES (father's education, mother's education, affluence)
- Country level predictors: economy (GDP, Gini coefficient), alcohol consumption per capita
- Statistical analysis: Multilevel modelling, gender-stratified



## Results

### Random coefficients

#### Lifetime use

|                  | Girls       |      | Boys        |      |
|------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
|                  | Var. (SD)   | p    | Var. (SD)   | p    |
| Education father | .002 (.048) | .079 | .008 (.090) | .020 |
| Education mother | .015 (.121) | .000 | .008 (.090) | .002 |
| Family affluence | .007 (.086) | .003 | .021 (.145) | .000 |

➡ All SES effects on lifetime use vary between countries, with the exception of the father's education among girls.

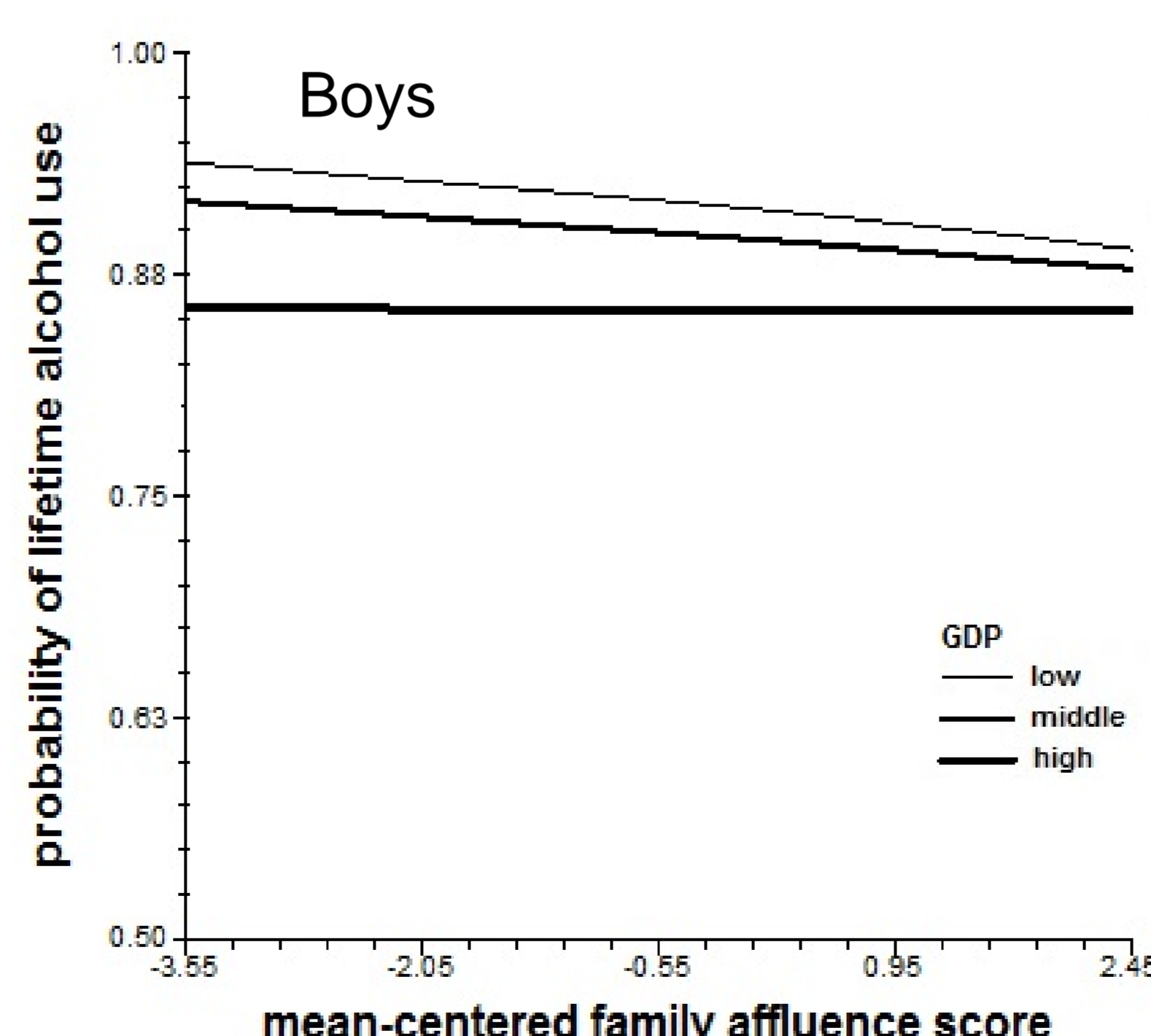
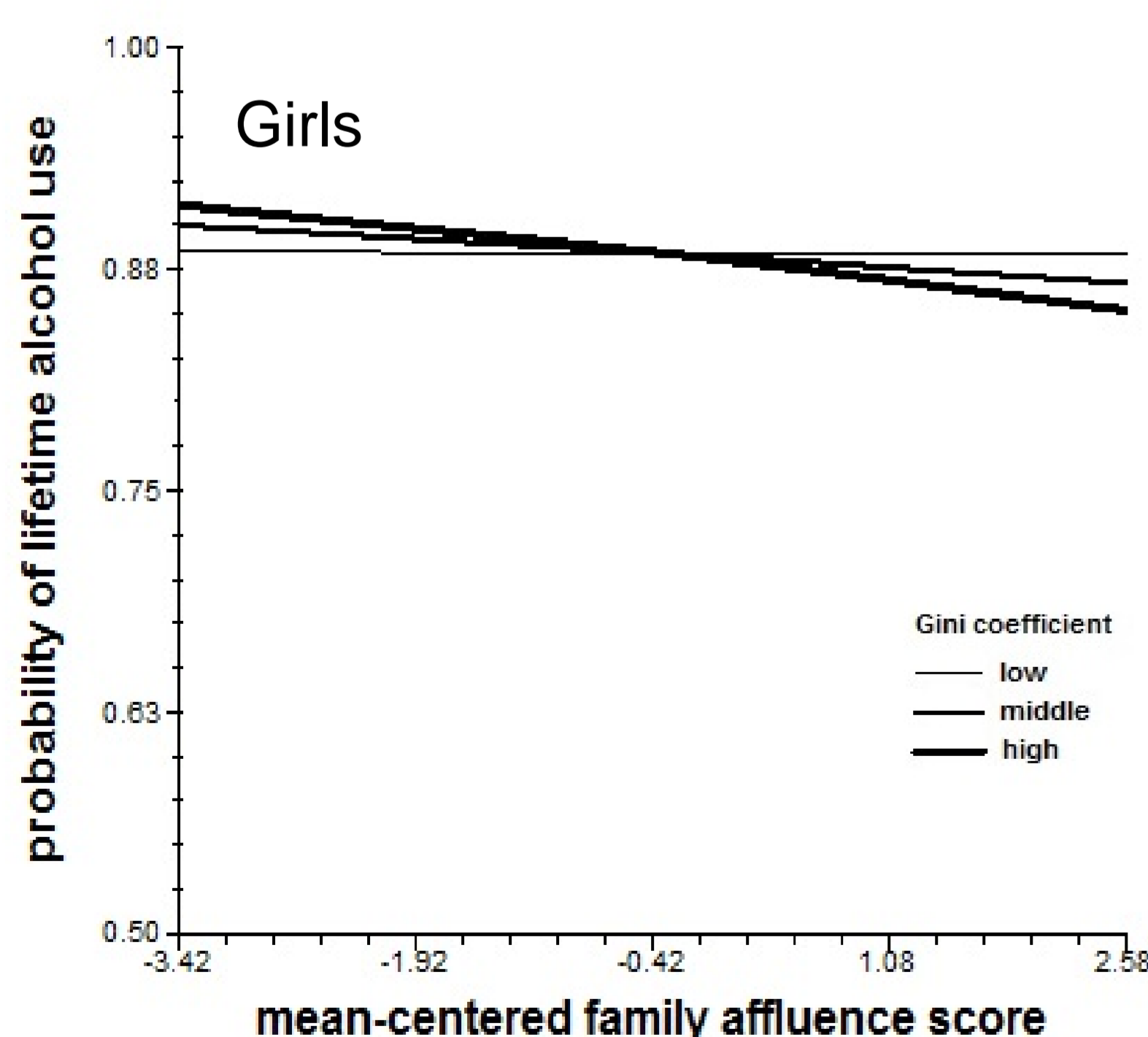
#### Episodic heavy drinking

|                  | Girls       |      | Boys        |      |
|------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
|                  | Var. (SD)   | p    | Var. (SD)   | p    |
| Education father | .003 (.053) | .025 | .002 (.044) | .302 |
| Education mother | .004 (.067) | .001 | .001 (.034) | .500 |
| Family affluence | .004 (.059) | .002 | .002 (.050) | .008 |

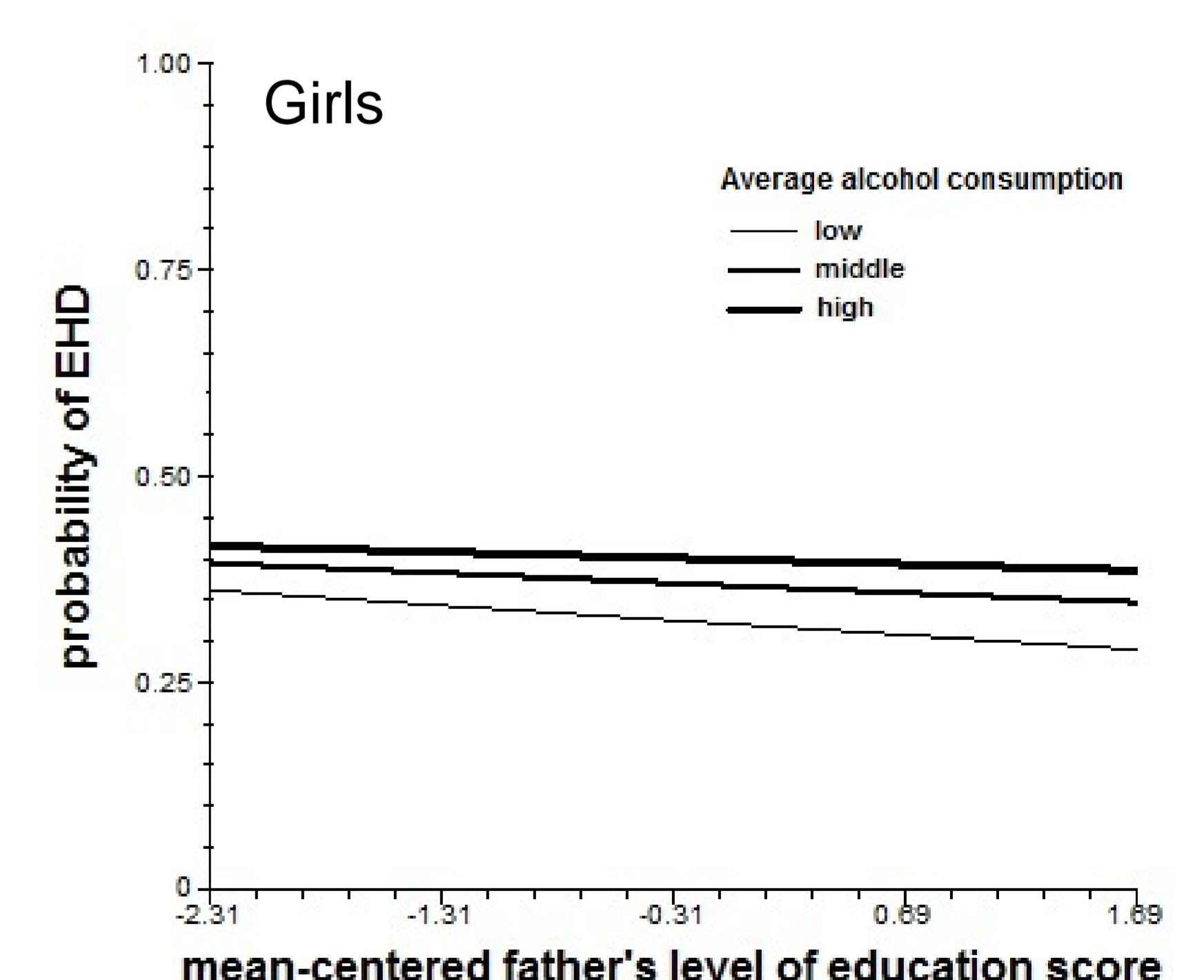
➡ Most SES effects on EHD vary between countries, with the exception of the parents' education among boys.

### Cross-level interactions

#### Lifetime use



#### Episodic heavy drinking



## Conclusions

- Association between individual SES and adolescent alcohol use largely varied between countries.
- Lifetime alcohol use: SES effects partly moderated by economic country characteristics
  - Protective effect of affluence leveled off in economically best-posed countries
- EHD: SES effects partly moderated by average alcohol consumption on country level
  - protective effect of father's education strongest in countries with low consumption (girls)

## References

- Casswell, S., Pledger, M., & Hooper, R. (2003). Socioeconomic status and drinking patterns in young adults. *Addiction*, 98, 601-610.
- Grittner, U., Kuntsche, S., Gmel, G., & Bloomfield, K. (2012). Alcohol consumption and social inequality at the individual and country levels – results from an international study. *European Journal of Public Health*, 23, 332-339.
- Hibell, B., Guttormsson, U., Ahlström, S., Balakireva, O., Bjarnason, T., Kokkevi, A., et al. (2012). *The 2011 ESPAD Report. Substance use among students in 36 European countries*. Stockholm: The Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

contact: gomesdematos@ift.de